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Groups Appeal Wild Horse Fertility Control Program

The Cloud Foundation and the Colorado Wild Horse and Burro Coalition have filed an Appeal and Petition for a Stay with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) regarding the BLM's plans to continue fertility control on wild horse mares on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range this season.

According to the BLM Billings Field Office decision record dated July 29, 2005, 20 mares aged 11 years and older would receive fertility control (Porcine Zona Pellucida, or PZP) vaccine for the purposes of suppressing herd growth rates in order to manage for healthy horses on healthy rangelands. The fertility control was scheduled to begin in September.

The IBLA has 45 days in which to rule on the Petition for a Stay; BLM may not move forward with fertility control until a ruling is made. If the ruling upholds the BLM decision, then BLM may proceed with fertility control. The IBLA will also rule on the appeal but has a longer timeframe in which to do so.

Fertility control research began on the Pryor herd in 2001 and has continued every year since then. The BLM has analyzed the impacts of the fertility control each year in an environmental assessment.

Current estimates place the population of the Pryor herd at 165 horses, including 26 live foals (out of 35 recorded births). Nearly all of last year's foal crop was lost due to natural mortality, including mountain lion predation. No evidence of mountain lion predation has been seen this year.

The decision record and environment assessment is available on the internet at: http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/state_info/mt/pryor.html or by contacting the Billings Field Office at 406-896-5013.

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